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## DOH-PINELLAS IDENTIFIES CASE OF HEPATITIS A IN FOOD SERVICE WORKER; ENCOURAGES VACCINATION



### Contact:

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The Florida Department of Health in Pinellas County (DOH-Pinellas) has identified a case of hepatitis A in a food service worker in Madeira Beach. Following laboratory confirmation on May 22, DOH-Pinellas immediately began conducting an epidemiological investigation and today determined the individual worked at Friendly Fisherman located at 150 John's Pass Boardwalk Place between May 7 – 20 while infectious.

If you frequented this restaurant during that period and have not previously been vaccinated for hepatitis A, you should consider getting vaccinated. You will receive the first dose of the hepatitis A immunization. The second dose is provided six months after the first. If you have previously received the hepatitis A vaccine you do not need to take additional action. DOH-Pinellas is offering the vaccine at the following locations Monday-Friday from 7:30am until 5:00pm:

- St. Petersburg: 205 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. St. N
- Pinellas Park: 6350 76th Ave. N
- Mid-County (Largo): 8751 Ulmerton Rd
- Clearwater: 310 N. Myrtle Ave
- Tarpon Springs: 301 S. Disston Ave

DOH-Pinellas will be closed in observance of Memorial Day on Monday, May 27. Business will resume at 7:30am on Tuesday, May 28.

Hepatitis A vaccine may provide protection against the disease *if given within two weeks after exposure*. Patrons should monitor for symptoms of hepatitis A infection which include sudden onset of abdominal discomfort, dark urine, fever, diarrhea, pale white stools, and yellow skin and eyes (jaundice). Anyone experiencing these symptoms should seek medical attention promptly.

**DOH-Pinellas has a 24-hour hotline has been set up for people who have questions about hepatitis A. The number to call is 727-824-6932.**

Vaccination is the best way to prevent hepatitis A. People who should be vaccinated for hepatitis A include:

- All children at age 1 year
- People who are experiencing homelessness
- Users of recreational drugs, whether injected or not

- Men who have sexual encounters with other men
- People with direct contact with others who have hepatitis A
- Travelers to countries where hepatitis A is common
- People with chronic or long-term liver disease, including hepatitis B or hepatitis C
- People with clotting-factor disorders
- Family and caregivers of adoptees from countries where hepatitis A is common

### **What is Hepatitis A?**

Hepatitis A is a highly contagious disease that attacks the liver. People infected with hepatitis A are most contagious from two weeks before onset of symptoms to one week afterwards. Not everyone who is infected will have all the symptoms. Symptoms usually start within 28 days of exposure to the virus with a range of 15-50 days. Symptoms can include:

- Jaundice (yellowing skin and whites of eyes)
- Fever
- Diarrhea
- Fatigue/tired
- Loss of appetite
- Nausea and vomiting
- Stomach pain
- Dark-colored urine
- Pale or clay colored stool

### **How is Hepatitis A treated or Hepatitis A infection prevented?**

- Practicing good hand hygiene – including thoroughly washing hands with soap and water after using the bathroom, changing diapers, and before preparing or eating food – plays an important role in preventing the spread of hepatitis A.
- **Hepatitis A vaccine is the best method of preventing infection.**
- No medicines can cure the disease once symptoms appear. People with hepatitis A symptoms should seek medical care immediately.
- Most people get better over time but may need to be hospitalized.
- Previous infection with hepatitis A provides immunity for the rest of a person's life.
- People that are exposed to hepatitis A may be given vaccine or immune globulin within 14 days of exposure to prevent infection.

### **How Hepatitis A is Investigated by the Department of Health**

After a case of hepatitis A has been reported to the FDOH by a health care provider, a county health department (CHD) epidemiologist will interview the individual and collect information regarding the timeline of their previous 50 days, including travel, occupation, food history and more. The epidemiologist will then identify close contacts of the ill person who should receive the hepatitis A vaccine to prevent disease. The majority of cases are close contacts of persons experiencing homelessness or persons who use injection or non-injection drugs. Less than 5% of cases are food workers. To date, FDOH has not identified a case of hepatitis A transmission from a food worker to a restaurant patron.

Go to [www.PinellasHealth.com](http://www.PinellasHealth.com) or call (727) 824-6900 for information about DOH-Pinellas. Follow us on Twitter @HealthyPinellas.

## About the Florida Department of Health

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